

Virtual Masters of Game Design with Tommy Tallarico

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SPEAKERS

Tommy Tallarico, Scott Rogers

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Scott Rogers 00:13

Our guest is a multi talented veteran with a career spanning almost 30 years. He is a video game composer, musician, sound designer, television personality, live show creator, Director, credit creative director and producer and the president of his very own video game company. He has worked on over 300 video game titles including the Terminator Earthworm Jim Pac Man, world Spider Man Advent Rising and Metroid Prime. He is the creator of the concert series video game. Video Games Live a multi award winning symphony orchestra that has played video game music across the world since 2002. He founded the Game Audio Network guild, which recognizes achievements in video game music and audio. He is an emeritus board member for the Game Developers Conference and appear leader for the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences. In addition, he's co hosted the television, television shows electron electric playground, sorry back, and reviews on the run for g4 network. He is currently the president of Intellivision entertainment, which is launching the AMIGO console later this year. Please welcome a master of gaming. Tommy Tallarico. Yay. This is normally where you get a lot of applause thunderous applause. Holy crap. I sound busy. Yeah, you do, man. Where do you where do you sleep? Tommy? Tallarico. How am I doing here? No, yeah.

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Tommy Tallarico 01:43


It's funny. I was. I was diagnosed with something called a super sleeper. Which I only need about four hours sleep at night. So I Oh, totally. I only I only sleep four hours a night. I can't sleep more than that. It's weird. You're just like Batman. Yeah, I think he's open. Yeah.

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Scott Rogers 02:04

So all right. So we always start, first of all, thank you very much. I've been wanting to get you to come and join us for a couple of years now. So I'm so glad we found this, this little moment in your schedule that we can have you come on. So this, I'm thrilled to have you here. Now we

always start masters of game design with a very hard question. And that is Tommy Tallarico. What is your favorite game?

 Tommy Tallarico 02:28

I'm gonna go with I think one of the most perfect design games, especially in even for the time it came out, but still going back now and playing it. Not necessarily the game I would play the most. But but from a perfection standpoint, Super Mario World. The Super Nintendo, for me, was like the graphics were beautiful. The audio was amazing. The level design that Miyamoto did, and I asked me a moto when I worked with him on Metroid Prime, I asked him about Super Mario World and and what were his secrets and his thoughts about, you know, how did he make that so great. It was actually a funny story, because he said, he goes well, what we did. And Scott, you know, this from me and Scott have worked on a number of big projects together. You know, back back on the PlayStation, PlayStation two, we worked on creating amazing games.

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But so one of the things that Miyamoto told me and for those of you don't know, Shigeru Miyamoto is like the Steven Spielberg of our industry, he's the greatest of all time. And always will be he's the guy who created Mario and Zelda

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Pikmin everything from Pikmin.

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You name it was it was great and amazing. It was probably it's, it's fair to say that Miyamoto invented that position of game designer, right? Yeah, he really did. Yeah, Donkey Kong was his first game. So that's how about that for hitting it out of the park your first time at bat.

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But and what he told me was really interesting, because he said, and when I asked him about that game, how is it so perfect? How did you? You know, because when you work on games, like I said, as Scott will tell you, it's always about the time and budget, right? It's, it's how many months do we have to work on this game? And then there's a cut off date, because that budget is based around how many units excuse me, the sales department thinks they can sell, you know, so.

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So everything's time and budget. And with me Emoto he really doesn't have that right because they're gonna sell 10s of millions of these things no matter what. But But what you



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What he told me was really interesting. He says, Look, we put a timeline together with the team. And we said, this is what we want to create, how long is it going to take us and let's be conservative. So we don't go over this and that.



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And they hit every milestone. And they made it to the end. And then the trick up his sleeve was. Now I'm going to give you all six more months to tweak it.



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Imagine all of the games that you worked on, and we worked on together. Imagine at the very end when we were right about to deliver the gold master. You know, the word came down. Hey, guys spend the next six months now and make it better? Like how great whatever. Yeah, and we've got some great games together. How great would those games have been? Right? So it's just a kind of an interesting, Brian. Absolutely. Mario World.



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Yeah, that's, that's a luxury that most game developers do not get that sadly. All right. So so let me ask you before Miyamoto before all this other great stuff. How did you get into gaming? What was the what was your, your big opportunity, your big break? that got you into gaming? Yes, great. Good question. It's, it's a bit of a story. But it's an interesting one that hopefully people will appreciate and take away take away some some hints about getting in the industry. So you know, my



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two greatest loves growing up always music and video games. And you know, I'm 53 year old years old now. So I was a part of Gen X, which were the first generation to grow up on video games. And, you know, my very, my first console was basically a Pong machine. It was called the Colico Telstar. We got that in 1975. So I was seven years old.



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And for those of you who didn't grow up in the late 70s.



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I mean, what an amazing time to be a kid in



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the x, rocky came out. In 1977, Space Invaders came out arcades were busting Star Wars came out for the first time. In 78, you had things like Van Halen. And by 1980, you had, you know, Tron and 81, and E T, and, you know, all these, it was just video games were blooming, it was just the most amazing time to be a kid going like from seven to 1213 years old, when all this kind of explosion in pop culture was happening. So, so I got the bug early about video games, and,



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and it was always something I wanted to do. And what I and I grew up on the East Coast in Massachusetts, in fact,



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excuse me, I don't have COVID I swear, I just



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let me grab a drink here.



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So



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so when I turned 21, I come from an Italian family. I'm 100%, Italian. And I'm the I'm the oldest son and Italian family like that means some shit. And



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the younger brother and sister, and when I turned 21, I literally left my parents crying on the doorstep. My family, it was everything I ever known. And I just got in my little two seater car. I had three T shirts and a pair of jeans, and a couple of rolling keyboards and a little four track Fostex recorder. And I just drove out west. And I didn't have any money. I didn't have a place to stay. I had no job. I had no friends out there nothing. And



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you know, and you know, my mom was given me the speech, you know, hey, you know, you can always come back. Don't worry about it. You can always



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you know, my dad's like, go get them kid. You know, I know. I believe in you and all this stuff. So I was fortunate to grow up with very supportive parents and supportive family unit and I love I love your dad. By the way. I've never met your mom, but your dad is I can tell everybody Tommy's dad is awesome. Yes, yes. He just turned 80 A couple of weeks ago. Oh my gosh. Well, happy birthday to him. Yeah. And and, and he always instilled upon me, you know, positive mental attitude.



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You know, always having, you know, believing in yourself, making things happen for yourself. Don't wait around for shit to happen to you. You have to go out and take it kind of vibe you know and a big believer if anyone's ever watched the secret or read the book or Napoleon Hills thinking Grow Rich



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sure any of these positive mental attitude, books, that's that's how I live my life gratitude, vision boards, climbing mountains every day. And and. And so when I went out to California again, I literally had a credit card was \$500 I was just using it for gas. And I bought a loaf of bread and peanut butter and jelly. And that kind of lasted me for the week. And when I got to California, I was homeless. I was literally sleeping under the pier at Huntington Beach, and



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newspaper though the first day I was out there, and I thought job for selling keyboards at Guitar Center. Again, being from the East Coast, I'm like, okay, I can bullshit my way into that job. So I, I walked into the Guitar Center in Orange County, and I demanded to speak to the manager. And people like, oh, we have, you know, disgruntled customers. I said, is the manager here? Yes, I'd like to speak to him. Okay. And I'm 21 years old, right? Fresh Off the Boat, as they would say. And I walked in. Yes, sir. Can I help you? I said, Yes, you can. And I had the ad in the newspaper in my hand, and I threw it on his desk. And I said, I said, you can help me, because I got the best news in the world for you. You don't have to look for anyone to fill this position anymore. I've arrived. And the guy's like laughing. And he's like, he's like, you're not from around here. Or, you know, because people in California are like, totally laid back. And, you know, he could tell he's like, you're from New York, where you from, you know? And I said, Yeah, a Massachusetts and my parents were in New York, but.



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And I said, Yeah, I just got to town. He goes, got to tell us three hours ago. And then I said, Look, isn't this great? You don't have to. He gonna save you that time. You don't have to look

Look, isn't this great? You don't have to, I'm gonna save you that time. You don't have to look at all those resumes. You don't have to like go, oh, gosh, you're gonna have to spend like a half hour interviewing people. That's gonna be a pain in the ass. I'm here. I mean, I'll start now. And the guy who liked my attitude so much is like, you know why? You're hilarious. Start tomorrow, come back tomorrow, and you're hired. And I didn't even fill out an application. And it's funny. And so.



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So again, I was homeless. And I figured, look, if you're going to be homeless, you might as well do it on the beach in Orange County, California. I mean, the people I'm looking behind me, these people pay \$20 million dollars for these houses. I'm sitting here by myself, you know, getting the same view for free.



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But here's the crazy part of the story if that wasn't



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so I like I said I had three T shirts, or one of those T shirts was for a video game system that hadn't even come out in America yet. This is the late 80s. It was called the turbo graphics. 16. Scott, I'm sure you're very familiar with the Turbo graphics 16 It was called the piece



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in Japan. And the way I got this t shirt, because if folks were around back in the late 80s, early 90s You would know that there wasn't video game T shirts. There weren't you know, it wasn't. There wasn't a hot topic. There wasn't the internet. Walmart didn't and Kmart didn't stock video game T shirts. They weren't the anything. And so how did I get this t shirt? Well, the summer before I used to get all the video game magazines. And it was Bill cockles magazine. You remember Scott Bill calm? Oh, yeah, I remember Bill. Yeah, electronic Games magazine



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in there, and it said that turbo graphics 16. And it listed like seven state fairs that they were going to be at, right? To try this new machine. And the closest one to me was in Toronto, it was about an eight hour drive.



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And my poor mother I made her go with me. And me and my mom drove to Toronto for eight hours, just to go to the state fair. Just so I could wait in line for two hours to play this video game machine that no one had ever played before. And I played it and it was like bonks

adventure or something. And at the end after playing it for like 15 minutes, they had me fill out a survey so they were doing market research they were doing you know, I was I was I was a game tester at that point. And, and so for my troubles, they gave me a t shirt, a turbo graphics 16 t shirt, which I still have to this day. And so what t shirt am I going to wear on my first day at work? Well, this is my trophy this



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Here's my you know, this was my my big thing to me. And so the very first day I'm in California two days now, and now I'm wearing a turbo graphics 16 t shirt, and hand to God, God is my witness, the very first person who walked in the door. I don't know if you know him Scott or not, but you might not even know the person but his name was Seth Mendelssohn. And Seth worked for Virgin Games, it was called Virgin Mastertronic. Back then, he worked for Richard Branson, and Richard Branson was starting a virgin video game company, right down the street, Seth walks in, he sees this kid with a turbo graphics 16 t shirt on and he says, holy crap, where did you get that? I'm like, Oh, he's like, do you know about video games? I'm like, I know everything about video game. So I proceeded to download 21 years of my video game knowledge on this poor guy. And, and so you hired me there on the spot. He said, he says, Do you want a job? I said, Yes, doing once. And he said, just, you know, do what you did to get that t shirt. We'll just play the games and tell us what you think and find bugs and this and that. And he just liked my attitude and my knowledge of video games. And I was the very first game tester ever hired at Virgin. And so I was I was in California, three days, and I was in the video game industry. And



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after, I would always bug the vice president of the company, to Hey, can I do music? Can I do music? Can I do music, I'll do it for free. If you don't like it, you don't have to use it. But please just give me the opportunity.



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And, and I didn't know how to do music for video games back then you pretty much had to be a computer programmer. But I had figured out a way to use MIDI, which stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface, which that I knew on keyboards, and it's just basically the transfer of because music is numbers, basically, you know, and so it was the transfer of those numbers. And so we created a hardware platform for me, where I could take my MIDI keyboard, and I could check right into the sound chip of the Gameboy and the NES. And the Sega Genesis was just coming out. So I was able to play the sound chips, right on the on the piano on my keyboard. And then we looped in, they were like version one of MIDI sequencers, which basically just recorded the information from a synthesizer, and it recorded it on a screen. And so and so I had basically created this way where I could use the systems to play music, and then record it onto the computer and I had to tweak everything by hand. So anyway, but but they gave me the shot in the very first game I worked on, was the original Prince of Persia, with teknor. And him and his dad had worked on I think, the Commodore 64, the Apple two, whatever the first version was, we were then doing a version for Nintendo. And it's for the

Gameboy or for the for the NES Gameboy. Okay, which basically, it had the same chip the NES in the same exact Township. And so we later took what I did on the Gameboy, and then we ported that to the NES as well.



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And so I wrote some music, get some sound effects, transported some music, and it ended up like winning awards and big write ups. And so they ended up making me the full time music guy, but put the whole thing about that story that I want to tell folks is now some people might listen to that story. And they might say, golly, gee, you're so lucky. Right? And, and I hate that word. Luck. Never used the word luck around me. It's insulting. Actually. Yeah, no, I, I agree. 100%. That yeah, there's that saying? It says preparation meets opportunity. That's, that's what it is. Yes. So can you create your own luck? Okay, sure. But but, you know, was it lucky that I left my parents crying on the doorstep was lucky that I cried myself to sleep for two weeks alone scared in a car by myself. As I'm going, you know, going across country was it lucky that I was homeless? Was it lucky that I demanded to see the manager and talked my way into job? Was it lucky that I drove eight hours with My poor mom to get that turbo graphics t shirt? You know? So so, you know,



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oh, we never wait or



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Round two, for your dream to happen to you, you got to got to got to go out there and take it, my friends, you've got to take it. And don't blame anyone else except yourself, you know, you are in control of your own destinies, and you got to make things happen. And the great thing about the video game industry and Scott will back me up on this I know is that it's huge as it is 100 and \$60 billion a year industry, blah, blah, blah. But within the industry, it's actually a pretty tight community, you know, and you, you can put yourself in positions to be successful in the industry. And I got news for you, it's not necessarily the most talented person



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who gets the gig. So throw that shit out of your mind to talent is about 50% of it. I'm not the most talented composer, but I'm the most successful, right? So and So what what's the difference? The difference is, consider 50% of it being 50% is talent. But the other 50%. And this would be if you take nothing away from anything today, please take this. The other 50% is networking.



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Ability to sell yourself to the people who you want to be in the same industry with. And so if people spent as much time networking, and again, maybe it's just bettering yourself, you know, how to make friends and influence people how to make everyone fall in love with you. Like

now to make friends and influence people now to make anyone fall in love with you. Like there's so many amazing books, self help books, because you might say yeah, but Tommy, you know, I'm a bit of an introvert. Well, again, that's your crutch, get rid of it, you can change that you can better yourself, you can learn how to get out of that. You got to be able to sell yourself. And and Scott, me and Scott's relationship is a perfect example of this. What means Scott first met, when Scott I think we were at Namco. At that time, we were working on a game together called treasures of the deep. I was doing the music. Scott was the producer. Black Ops was the developer Namco was the publisher. But me and Scott had a really great working relationship. I continued to impress Scott Scott. Well, I'll tell you, I'll tell you one further. I met you because I was working with Bill Anderson, who you had worked with at Virgin at Virgin a bill was the last so so once again, it's that networking, right? I would say hey, who's the good guy to make music? And Bill goes? Well, of course Tommy Tallarico you gotta have to hear me. Right? So yeah, so it's all networking, right? It's all about, I mean, I tell my students all the time, about 75 to 85% of every job I've ever gotten has been because of friends. It has nothing to do with with you know, I mean, I like your strategy going in there and saying, You're gonna hire me, I'm the I'm the best person for the job. But more often than not, it's because it's Hey, Tommy knows somebody. And Tommy says, Oh, I was talking to somebody and they need a game designer, or they need a producer or whatever. I say, hey, somebody needs a musician. Oh, I know, Tommy, whatever it all. And if you like each other and your friends, then you want to work with each other. Exactly. And if I was a dick to Bill, or if I was a jerk to Scott or whatever, then I wouldn't be here talking to you today. Right? And then Scott ends up leaving nibco And he goes to Capcom, we'll get through Scott calls up when he's working on his next game, you know, because we had so much we had so much fun doing treasures. We had so much fun doing Pac Man. And now I'm like, oh, let's keep the let's keep the good times rolling. Let's get Tommy and, and his gang and to help out. And so so it's so important for folks, you know, watching to understand that is that because so many times I see people spend all of their time just working on their talent, as opposed to working on bettering themselves or networking with people and you say, Well, you know, how important is location? You know, hey, if I'm in such and such, you know, is it is it better? Or is it easier these days with technology? And I always say look, do you want to go fishing in a pond



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that's smaller, and has so that you have more opportunity to get a fish.



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Or but there's less fish, or do you want to? Or do you want to go in a bigger pond with bigger fish, and more and a lot more fish in. So that's the thing were



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putting yourself in that position. So for example, if you wanted to be an actor, okay, and you live in Atlanta,



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your chances of being an actor, as opposed to somebody who's in Hollywood.



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Again, because of that networking thing, who knows who you're going to meet in line at Starbucks, who knows whose card is going to break down and you're there to give them a lit, who knows, a friend of a friend knows such and such right? Put yourself where the industry is, if you want to be a fashion designer, didn't go to Milan, go to New York, go to Paris, don't go to Nashville, right. But if you're looking to get into country music, go to Nashville, and don't go to Vancouver, Canada, because that ain't gonna work out for you. You know, it's so you always want to put yourself and here's the deal.



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Everybody has a dream, right? Everybody has this idea and dream in their head, they want to do something greater out there, million dollar idea. And I know a lot of successful people. And they all will tell you the same exact thing. The difference between people who fail, and people who succeed is that the people who succeed, never give up. And they're always always working to reach their goal. And they never take a day off from it, right. And so the way I look at my goals, I kind of envision them, I picture them as a mountain that I have to climb. And I, I know that going getting to the top, I know that there's going to be rocks falling down, there's going to be sleet and snow storms, there's going to be rain, there's going to be when trying to knock me off, I'm going to get to a spot where I can't move any further. So I'm gonna have to figure out a way around, I'm going to have people from below, tugging at my feet to try to drag me down. But this is what I know. I know that no matter what, I will be at the top of that mountain. I might not know exactly how I'm going to get there just yet. Or all the things I'm going to have to get through to get there. But I will be there and nothing is going to stop me. So when when you're in your career, and you have that confidence. That is the single most important thing that you can have. You want. And again, there's a fine line between confidence and arrogance, right. You know, being egotistical, and having confidence are two totally different things that are in the same area. But you need to don't ever feel like, oh, I don't want to come across as confident because somebody you know, then somebody will think I mean, ego ego is like when you're looking down on people. And when you think you're better than anyone else. Again, I've already told you here, I'm not the best game composer, game designer or hardware CEO, but I'm going to be the most successful one, right? And so that that's confidence, you have to believe in yourself. That is the key to success and never giving up. Because I got news for you. There's 50 other people who want the same exact thing free as you do. And you got to outwork them every single day, how can you do something that they're not doing? And that is the effort that you put in, will pay off? You've got to show if you want to be a game designer, you should be hooking up going to the game does the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco every you know early March? That's right. 17,000 people in the industry all and that is your networking, heaven. But then there's also things like



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the with the local chapters or the IGDA International Game Developers Association they have



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what about what about musicians? Because I know that that there's like I always am getting messages from people who are like, Hey, I'm a musician and I want to get into video games. And I know that you have for example your your game audio



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networked guild right that the what opportunities or what strategies? Would you recommend for someone who wants to make music for video games nowadays? Yeah, so So audio gang.org is the website, it's a nonprofit, there's over 3500 members in 40 countries.



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It's a great way to network. That's why I created a game, Audio Network guild, which spells out gang, but that network is so important part of that, of course, if I didn't put network in, then it would just be called the game audio Guild and gag is not a good name. But, um, so so. So that's, that's your first step is getting involved. But But this carries over to everything, though, for game designers, for game artists, for game producers, whatever, it's the same advice that I would give everybody. Too often, when people are looking for jobs, too often what they do is they want to impress you. And you know, you're taking your time. Because, hey, you have to focus on me on this special person. And let me do let me tell you why I'm so special in this in that right?



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What you got to do instead, and this is the part of the story about Guitar Center, I left out, what I did was, the thing to remember is anyone in a position of power, and I don't care what



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career you have, or what job you're in, when you're in a position of power, you always have too much on your plate. And that will never, ever go away. So instead of going in, when you're networking with people, instead of going in saying, Hey, me, me, me, hire me, me, me, me, the better approaches? Hi, I'm Tommy Tallarico. How can I help you? How can I take something off of your plate? I'm willing to do that. For free. Give me anything, I don't care if it's sweeping your floors or, or running a FedEx, whatever it is. But are there things on your plate right now that I can take off? Free of charge? I'm willing to do that. And every single person has at least two or three things that are backed up at that very second, you know?



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And so having that kind of approach to say, and again, that was kind of my approach with the guy at Guitar Center, right was, look, I'm gonna save you a whole shitload of time. Isn't this great. And the guy is sitting there going, like, yeah, that is great. She, like that's literally two

days, I'm gonna have to do this crap for this guy's awesome. I'm gonna hire him. And so, so always go in with that belief, because so many times people make the mistake of Look at me, look at me Look at me, as opposed to how can I help you. It's a great way to get your foot in the door. Right now. That's great advice, Tommy, and definitely something that I've seen in action many times over my career with friends. Now, one of the things that I make, there's so much stuff we could talk about, but I'm trying to hit kind of the high points here. One of the things that's always impressed me about you, is that you're always innovating. You're You're like the first dude, I knew who made an album of video game music. You were the I remember when you came to now I don't know. I'm not going to take credit I my memory. I'm getting old. So my memory is not as good as he used to be. But was I remember you coming to me on Maximo and saying, I really want to do live orchestra music for this game. Was that the first game you actually did that on? Was for Maximo?



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No, it was one of them. It was it was in the first month or so. Yeah, we okay. It was Maximo. And we were also working with Electronic Arts on



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with Michael G. Aquino on Medal of Honor. Oh, nice. Yeah. But that was definitely within the first couple of weeks. So yeah, I would say it was. Yeah, that was one of the ones Exactly. Pretty, pretty close up there. So what So so when, like, what did you do? What, what? What happened in the industry that allowed you to all of a sudden, like, do this? Because obviously, this is the spark that gets you to Video Games Live eventually. Right? Would you say that's fair to say? Right? Like working with the orchestra and all that so so. So tell us about that. Because this is a pretty important I think moment in in game music history. Yeah, well, you know, again, like you had mentioned



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And I was the very first person to come out with a video game soundtrack album. And again, this is in the early 90s. It was on Capitol Records, right and it was called Tommy till Rico's Greatest Hits volume one. I had a greatest hits before I even had a career. It was amazing.



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But I had convinced Capitol Records to put out this album of video game music, and they're like, Who the hell would listen to video game music? Don't people turn that off? And I'm like, listen to this. And people and they listen to it. And we're like, wow, this is actually good music. And so. So that was innovative. And everyone told me, I was crazy. And I was nuts. And no one would ever listen to video game music. Now. It's now it's common. And then before Video Games Live, and Scott, you remember this, because you're on the show as well. You know, me and Vic came up with electric playground, and then reviews on the running Judgement Day where we weren't again, this is 1994. Okay. And imagine me and Victor Lucas walking into ABC, NBC, Fox, MTV Discovery Channel. This is before g4.



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And saying, hey, we want to do a TV show about video games. And in the mid 90s, video games were like the Antichrist to television, because



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the TV numbers were going down because kids were playing their Sega Genesis in their PlayStation One, as opposed to watching TV. And so and I remember these TV executives going, so wait a second, you want us to put a video game TV show on? So what after they watch your show? They're gonna turn our network on and go play the video games. Get the hell out of here, you know. And again, this is pre internet. This is pre YouTube. This is pre Twitch TV. So here we are, again. We're creating things. See, my grandfather who came over from Italy, always told me, he says, you know, juice it when you do something you love. you'll never work a day in your life. Right? And so I was doing things that I wanted to see done. Like, I would love to hear video game music in an album. But no one's doing it. So does that mean that I say? Oh, well, I guess I'll wait for somebody to do it. No, I was like, Well, I'm gonna be the first then I'll go and do it with the television show. When they kicked us out of the office. We could have said, Oh, well, I guess that's, I guess no one's interested. No, we got up enough money. We shot a pilot episode. In fact, Mike Fisher was on that pilot episode, marketing VP of Marketing at Namco. And we did actually our very first episode ever was treasures in the deep. We got the big event. It was Ace Combat treasure that deep



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type crisis. Two out of three of my games on it. That's awesome. Exactly. I worked on two of those three games as well. And so so that was



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we just did it. If it didn't exist, that doesn't mean we take our toys and go home. That means we create it. And the same thing with Video Games Live. I said, Boy, would it be amazing to play the music to Halo and Mario and Zelda and mist and Metal Gear Solid and, and Kingdom Hearts and Sonic and let's play all this live. And, and and, again, no one had done it before. So it's it's funny. It's funny to me, I very distinctly remember being at EA three. And we were sitting in that little, a cruddy cafeteria area, you know where those tables are? Right? And we and we hadn't seen each other and maybe like a year or two. And I sat down. I'm like, Tommy, what are you up to? And he's like, I've got this idea. And I'm very excited about it. And I want to go and play video game music with a live orchestra. And I'm like, that sounds great. Tommy, you go do that.



39:15

Like I remember, I remember the moment when you told me about video games like No, David Perry always tells a funny story. For those who don't know, David Perry, he's my best friend

would for 30 years. He was the guy who programmed Earthworm Jim does



39:32

the Matrix Games, but he's also probably more well known now. As the person who created cloud gaming. He he raised \$50 million with his company guy Kai and then sold it to Sony for \$383 million dollars. So he you know, and that that basically became PlayStation now.



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And so, but Dave always tells a story he always says, you know, I remember Tommy coming



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And he's talking about his he's gonna do this concert and he's gonna be at the end he wants to do it at the Hollywood Bowl.



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Again, not not just not just like, oh, let's do a concert in like Idaho or something for 20 people. It's like, you know, my goal was no first show, biggest venue in the world Hollywood Bowl, one of the best orchestras in the world I'll fill 18,000 seats. That's what I'm going to do. And I'm gonna get Hideo Kojima from Metal Gear. So to fly out from Japan, I'm gonna get I'm gonna get a Yuji Naka the Creator to Sonic the Hedgehog, I'm gonna have the Halo team there, I'm gonna have the Nintendo folks there, I'm gonna have the World of Warcraft team, we're gonna, we're gonna do debut a brand new thing no one's ever seen or heard. And again, my agent at the time, who was who was my music for live shows, because we haven't done a live show yet. But he's a very famous guy in the music industry. And he's there shaking his head, like



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no one plays the Hollywood Bowl as their first show. What you do is, and no one even plays in LA, because that's where all the critics in the industry are. What you do is you play it in, you play it in, you know, Washington or something and you tune it up, you see what's wrong, but Tommy the Hollywood Bowl, not enough. See, maybe you too, are for 1015 years, when a couple of Grammy Awards, and then maybe you get invited to play the Hollywood Bowl. This is where the Beatles started. Frank Sinatra, Jimi Hendrix, you know, the greatest of the greats played the Hollywood Bowl, you know, one starts at the Hollywood Bowl. And, and, and if you get any, he says he goes, he just Yeah, had that look in your eye. I knew it. He goes, I knew it then. And David Perry. Oh, he says he does.



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He says I remember Tommy, tell me about the he's gonna play at the Hollywood Bowl. And he

says, and then a year and a half later, I'm literally sitting at the Hollywood Bowl watching his first show ever. And and I wouldn't take no for an answer. And I bug the hell out of you know, I called the LA Phil, I convinced them what a great idea. Isn't it going to be great that young people are going to come see an orchestra? Oh, yeah, we do like that idea. Well, you know, and, and, and so we did that first show. And all all of the, you know, all of the people that I mentioned who were going to be there, were there. And then some Stan Lee came. Yeah, we had Elijah Wood was there when he was hot with you know, when he was big with Lord of the Rings was just coming out. I mean, it was just, you know, and again, people thought I was crazy. And so David Perry's fun thing was, you know, when I started, you know, when I reinvented television here, and now. Now we're doing a brand new video game console. And again, people are like, Well, look, there's Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft. Like, like, you can't, you can't compete with those three people. And I say, why not? Well, because it's impossible. Oh, you mean like playing the first show at the Hollywood Bowl? Doing a 20 year television show about video games and winning an Emmy Award and Italian award? Oh, you mean like putting out the very first video game contract?



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Video game soundtrack like impossible like that. Oh, okay. Cool. So



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we're doing it then. And it's interesting. It was. It was a pretty big moment. Scott a couple of weeks ago when



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Gamestop had started promoting the Intellivision in the console. It's called a Miko. It's the Italian word for friend



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Gamestop started promoting it a few weeks ago. And in their stores, even though we're not even launching till October of this year. 1010. So we're seven months from launch. And they now have five foot posters in any game store, you're walking. We're up in the screens and the monitors were in all of their circulars that they give out to people. And now Scott, you tell me when when was the last time you walked into GameStop? It's red, Nintendo green is X Box. Dark blue is PlayStation. When was the last time you saw a fourth thing? Coloring there. Dreamcast orange? Yeah, maybe. Right? Yeah, 2020 years ago. And now. Here we go. It was there already. And so again, like David Perry says, I've known the kid I've known Tommy for the sentiment. I've known him 30 years. I wouldn't bet against him. And that kind of confidence though. If you have that in your



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Self. You. My friends are unstoppable. Unstoppable. The only person that can stop you is

self. You, my friends are on stoppable. Unstoppable. The only person that can stop you is yourself. You get in your own head, you don't think you're good enough? You have doubts. You have fears. Oh, maybe you don't have the stamina? Screw that. Put it out. And one of my big heroes is Walt Disney that I do. Yeah, right. And Walt,



45:26

Walt Disney risked everything he had three times in his life. The first one was when they told him he was crazy, because he wanted to make a cartoon that had sound in it. There like, no one. That's who cares about some other guy. And he did Steamboat Willie. And it was a big thing. Then he said, I want to do an hour long hour and a half long movie with a cartoon, like, are you crazy not gonna stand cartoons are three minutes long, no one is going to sit through a stupid cartoon. For now, Snow White wins an Academy Award.



46:05

Everything you had on it, everything you had. And then the third thing, Now won't you finally lost your mind, blah, blah, blah, won't save, I'm gonna build a place where people are gonna go. And families will be able to go on rides and do this, we're gonna build a theme park. And there's going to be riots and everyone. Again at the time, you have to remember merry go rounds were for kids. Right? And there weren't you know, so there weren't, you know, there weren't places where families would go, he invented that. And everyone said he was crazy. And he was going to fail, when he wished everything he had all in, because when you believe in yourself, you know that nothing is going to take you down nothing. And so I you know, I feel the same way about everything I've ever done. And that second thing, you doubt yourself, you're done, you're over. So what I would recommend to folks out there.



47:12

In order to start building your confidence, what you need to do is set little goals for yourself. very achievable things, right? And you either do it, or you don't. Right. And so it could be something as simple as I want to lose five pounds in the next two weeks. Now, weight is simply mathematics. How much calories are you eating? How much calories are your? Are you burning? Right? That's it. Right? How bad? Do you want to reach that goal? Are you willing to suffer for it? Are you willing to sacrifice for it? Because if the answer is no, and you can't do something like that, then again, you're not ready for the big time that don't you know, until you're ready to say, You know what, I'm just stubborn. And I am going to get to the top if my goal is to lose five pounds in 15 days.



48:17

Then I'm going to starve myself if I have to get there. Or I'm going to work out for six hours a day if I have to. And I'm only going to eat raw fruits and vegetables if I have to. And you can either do it or you can't. And it's so a great test for yourself is





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getting these small goals. And I got news for you. Once you get to the top of that mountain, that first mountain that you reach. Now you have the competence going, you know what I can do anything I put my mind to, and nothing except myself. I made it here. And I was the only one that could have stopped me from getting to the top right. And once you have that confidence, and you're at the top of that mountain, it's just a matter of looking around and choosing the next mountain you want to start to climb and that is it. See now sit here. I thought you were starting a video game company. But it sounds like you're starting a self help. Company. Right? It's all good. It's all good advice. All right. So let's so let's apply this to your latest mountain. And that is the Intellivision why? Why did you go after that mountain of Intellivision? Why did you feel that that brand was important to go after? And what is it that you're offering with this you like you said you go into GameStop? There is here's x box and here's Nintendo and here's Sony. There's three right? Oh, there can't possibly be room for a fourth right? What is it about what you guys are making your vision for this this system that comes out this October? What is it that what's so great about



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So let's hear it. Let's, let's hear the pitch. Yeah. So So



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by the way, I just saw that somebody left and they said that they're out and don't



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try to lose five pounds in two weeks. Yeah. Again, there's a person that just gave up right there.



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Because, well, if you weighed 300 pounds, you can't lose five, come on. But anyway, it's all it's all. It's all percentage anyway. But anyway, and I was just using that as an example. So so for those who always, always consult what is best for your health, right, that's yeah, I hope people understood the example I was making and we're didn't get insulted or whatever. But anyway, so yeah, the the difference is,



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the difference, of course, is that



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you know,



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when you look at the modern video game console of Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo, I found myself in a position where I can't play video games with my dad anymore. I can't play video games with my wife, right? There's no video games that we can play.



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The control. And why is that? Why? Why do you feel that way? With your wife or your dad? Many reasons. The controller is first and foremost, you put a switch in my dad's hands, you put a PlayStation four controller, Xbox controller, dual analog sticks for shoulder buttons for side buttons and a D pad. He's out. There's no way it's a non starter. So the controls are complex. The games take too long to get into, right. You know, my dad will never be good at fortnight ever, no matter how many times and how many hours he wants to dedicate to it. You know, it doesn't have the dexterity as others do. Right. And so there's a big steep learning curve for people who don't play video games to go into home consoles, or even PC gaming is even worse and more complicated. And so what us as gamers think of casual games, like you could say to me, Well, Tom, and you know, there's a lot of casual games on the switch, like casual couch Co Op games, like for example, overcooked, right. So you say well, overcooked, and so Okay, well, let me play with my wife. And again, it's a different mentality. We can't ever think as designers that everybody likes what we like, right? If you're making a game for a specific genre, yeah, right or per specific crowd, okay. But when creating a console, you know, that you want the world to love.



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You know,



Tommy Tallarico 52:58

I, my wife sat down and played Overwatch and said, Well, you know, the analog sticks, she doesn't like and they too many buttons. But she says So Tommy. So the the object of this game, and I love overcooked, by the way, I'm not I love the developer love the game. But she says, Tommy, so in this game, you you cook and clean. I'm like, Well, yeah, that's kind of that she's like, I don't like to do that in real life. Why would I want to do that in a video game? I'm like, Okay, that's a good point. And then, and then there's the timer that's counting down. Right, you know, timer timer, you're under, do as much as you can before the timer. And for her, it's like, look, I'm under the clock all day long. And when I come home, I want to relax. I don't want to be pressured. You know, I'm just trying to enjoy myself. And now you start to realize why a game like Candy Crush is so popular, right? Especially among, you know, women. You know, guys like to destroy stuff. And women like to create things. I mean, that's kind of you know, it's a general it's true.



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You know, and so, you know, when you think about that, and, you know, you think that way

you know, and so, you know, when you think about that, and, you know, you think that wow, like I wouldn't have perceived that. So. So that's where our approach is different. Because all of our games are cooperative. You can they all have single player, but they also all have couch Co Op as well, because that has gone away when the late 90s hit. And the internet entered into our industry and you remember this well sky multiplayer gaming now meant a kid in a dark room with his headphones on. And it's been like that for 20 years, right? Yes, there's some Co Op games, but they're not the norm anymore. I mean, Scott and everybody on this call, I would say to you



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I guarantee



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your fondest video game playing memories. Were when you were with someone else. Maybe it was your parents playing Zelda for the first time. Maybe it was Mario Kart with your friends or Goldeneye on the N 64 bombing on a Saturday. Whatever Dreamcast always was my brother and I tried to figure out Dragon's Lair together, right? Him calling out the moves and me writing them down. And we work together to solve that thing. Exactly. And so, you know, we're seeing that that's gone farther and farther away in our industry, so much so that the very last video game system that came with two controllers, do you know what it was Scott?



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I'm gonna guess although I might be wrong. It was a dismiss. It was your honor. Oh, my God. 19/93. Ancient go. That was the last video game console that came with now people say, Oh, what about the switch? Now? That's one controller that is split into two little crappy things.



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And so so the suit and what does that tell you? Well, tells you all you need to know that. And then you look at where the hypercasual market has gone. And it's all in mobile. Yeah, but mobile. So single player is solitary, just like the console games have become. And let's be honest, it's nothing more than a cash grab. Those games are being designed around how much money they can suck out of you. Right? For the most part, the bigger ones, right. And if you look at Children's edutainment, it's simply on mobile, but it's kids staring at a screen. What's the number one concern of young parents that they give their kids too much alone? Screen time? Right, right. And so that is what we are. We're in between mobile, and the switch. Were the console that simple, affordable, family entertainment, and that spells out the word safe, because none of our games have violence. None of them have sexual content. All of the content is rated E for Everyone or E plus 10. All of the games are 999 or less. No microtransactions. No in app purchases, no loot boxes. No in app advertising. You buy the game once you get it forever. It comes with two controllers that are very simple. They have color touchscreens. Very simple dial that the Intellivision disc has big buttons. motion controls like the Wii think of us like the Wii 15 years later, almost. But games are designed around people being able to pick up and play easy. And



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no matter what your skill level is, when you think of a game, like any card game, or board game that you play or dice game that you play with a group of friends. When you go to play that game. everybody's on the same level to start. That's what makes it enjoyable. Anyone can win this card game. Anyone can win Yahtzee anyone can win with a monopoly, whatever. Yes, there are methods of strategies. But everybody starts out on the same level. Scott, can you say that about 98% of the video games these days? Oh, heck no.



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You know, it's like, it's just it's incredible. But the learning curve to get up to speed. And so that's what we took a look at, and created all of our experience. I want grandpa to be able to kick his 20 year old hardcore gamer grandsons ass. That's my goal. How can we make sure that happens? Right so so that so that so that sounds awesome for the gamers right? This idea that getting the family together, getting them to play these, this family oriented



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material, you know, games together, but what I'm one of the things I'm really interested in when I was reading and listening to interviews about this is you were talking about the how you got teams to come and make these games and and one of the things that I read is that you are giving dev teams the development kits, which is traditionally been a source of revenue for the for the manufacturer, charging them I remember how expensive the old Nintendo systems and then they would charge you for Yeah, then we charge you for the cards, they would charge you then to get the Nintendo Seal of Approval. They would like note you every way they could, right. So how we have a lot of game developers that listen to this and and have joined us for this. Tell us about the experience of making something for the



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In television, why? Why would we want to make something for your system? Great question. So what I've done is I've reinvented the ecosystem within the gaming industry in regards to television, we curate every single one of our games. Right? So you talked about it that Nintendo Seal of Approval, right? Well, what the hell ever happened to that? Where did that go? Out the window?



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And so, we want to bring that back. We're about quality, not quantity, and we're gonna curate every game. So what we do is that we pick the best developers in the world, or they are developers come to us with their ideas and thoughts. And what happens is, we pay for the game upfront.



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What is it? Now Scott, as you know, that's the way it used to be in the old days in



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the 90s. But now that model has gotten away where studios either by, you know, they either by the studios, or indie gamers, indie developers, all like, you know, making, you know, they're trying to do a Kickstarter and Indiegogo, or they're bootstrapping everything themselves, everybody's living in the same dorm room or their mom's house while everybody's trying to save money, and they're working part time jobs, you know, and that's a shame. So what we do is we say, Look,



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we like your ID idea, we like your dream, we're gonna fund it, so that you don't have to worry about any of that stuff. And we're gonna give you a royalty. And we're gonna give you the dev kit, you don't have to pay for anything. And what I've done here, Scott, is we've created an incredible talented team of experts in all their fields, over 600 years of video game experience, just in our core team. So for example, three of the people who did all of the art the award winning art for Earthworm Jim wanting to Disney's Aladdin, cool spot global Gladiators, they work for me full time. They're my art directors, we've been working together 30 years. So so how would you like, and then for audio, I'm doing the audio stuff. And Joey and you know, we have art.



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Our team of audio professionals are here. The people who actually created the the, the operating system, and the hardware for the machine are all here internally, we give them to you, so that you can help optimize, we give you the audio, the best audio folks in the industry, the best art directors in the industry, to help you build your dream, because we're only successful if they're successful, and give them all of the marketing, all of the PR, the developers here are the most important cogs in our wheel. Because we I can build the greatest machine on the planet. But if you don't have the content to sell, and to make people want to buy your hardware, then it doesn't matter. So we're a very different kind of hardware company. Because all of us who created the machine came from the development side, the game developer side, and me and David Perry, and all these people. We know all the things wrong with the industry. From a marketing standpoint, from a developer standpoint, from an ecosystem standpoint, from a royalty standpoint, from a dev kit standpoint, from a tool standpoint, from an operational standpoint, from the struggles of indie developers. And what we've done is we said, let's fix every single one of those problems. We see this huge gaping hole in the video game industry. We know the reasons why there's 3 billion people who play games on mobile, yet only 200 million people that play on home consoles. Think about that for a second. That means that less than 8% of the people who play video games in the world are playing on Sony, X Xbox, or Nintendo or NPC as well. What what



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do you think of PlayStation you think of Nintendo right? Sure. Yeah. small portion of people who playing it. So I don't want to compete with Sony, Microsoft, Nintendo. And now Google, I guess you could say, I don't want they're fighting over those 200 million people. Let them do that. I want to drive a huge truck through the gaping hole that is those 3 billion people that play casual games, but they can't



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Playing with anyone. Right? So it sounds like as a publisher, you're not just provide, you know, you're not just manufacturing the hardware, you're not just, you know, creating this, this approval system to make sure that the quality is high. But it also sounds like you're offering this mentorship to these developers that need it. And that sounds amazing to me. So if I had a if I had an idea for a game, right, I'm like, I'm a game designer, I come up with crazy ideas all the time. What would be like what would I need to do to get to whoever needed television to go? Alright, I want I wanted this sounds great. How, what can I do? How can I help you Tommy Tallarico, making great games for your Intellivision



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did that's



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all you basically go to intellivision.com. Okay, well, contact page. And we have an email there for developers. And, and you might know Do you know, Jason? He knows. He was at NAMM. I know. I know. But that's okay. It's always good to make new friends. Yeah. Well, Jay Jason, he was the producer of you might have heard of some of these franchises. But he was at Konami for 12 years. He produced all the Metal Gear Solid games.



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He



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brought Dance Dance Revolution from Japan and brought it to the world. Castlevania contra I've heard.



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So he knows he knows video games, that you know, it's video games. Yeah. So yeah, you will reach out to him and his team. And and that's and they will sign you up with an NDA, a mutual

NDA, NDA. And then, and then yeah, we start talking from there. And does it doesn't matter. Like if this is a team of, you know, students who are just graduated or, or almost graduated, doesn't matter who it is doesn't matter what their experience is. So all you have to do is want to make a game. Yeah. And having a like, if you're a young studio like that, you know, having a demo is huge. Huge. So having an idea on paper. Okay, it's a good idea. But as you know, playable is always better. And what's it look like? Right, right, right. Yeah. So, so getting, getting, you know, a level or even a video together of, you know, the concept. That is major.



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Yeah, that's great. So that's good advice. So all of you game developers out there, get that video demo or playable demo. And then that way, it's, that's a good it's a good business card, right? Like it's a good way to get your foot in the door. Well, that's awesome. That Well, that sounds great. I am really eagerly looking forward to playing the Intellivision. I've been eyeing the woodgrain one myself. So, you know, I'm, I'm curious to see when it launches, I'll be there.



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So let me let me ask you about something else that you are involved with. And that is, you are a member of the Board of Governors for the Grammys? Yes. And



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I Oh, not anymore. Okay. No, but you were for a while. Yeah. Yeah. For so. So one of the big things that you did when you were involved with them as you push to legitimize video game music, and try to get there to be, you know, like a Grammy for Best Video Games score, but to my knowledge, as that hasn't happened yet, right? No, no, it Yeah. So what they did is, they put us with film and television, so it's okay, TV and video games. And in fact,



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we won the video game industry. One we beat movies and TV. It would have been in 2008. And it was for Christopher tins, Baba yetu from civilization four, and it won the category for best song, and it won for Best Album. And



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yeah, that was the very first video game soundtrack that was that that was that one in the category. And Austin wintry is music for journey was also nominated for a Grammy although didn't win that year. But so yeah, no, that happened in 1999. We put that through. Oh, well, that's great. That's so it's so it's actually been. So I've noticed that a lot of



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a lot. Originally a lot of composers would, you know, would some of them were trying to get to do video games, but I've been noticing a lot of people coming from video games or from Yeah, coming from video games into music, you know, like, like Michael, who started on Call of Duty



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And now he's doing Star Wars movies or you know, something crazy like that. Right? So like, what what, you know, if you're, you know, maybe you're a musician? What is What do you see as a good path for musicians? If they want to get involved with video games? Or, or if there are video game, you know, people that have already been doing some video games, you know, what, what are the options available for them? What What would you what advice? Would you give somebody who is looking to branch out? And how can they do that? So the best the best thing to do when people always ask me about, you know, because you have to put up a demo together, right?



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But you don't necessarily have to have, you know, 10 songs that are five minutes long. But you know, have a minute or so



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and have maybe five or six songs, write different songs. But here's where people make the mistake.



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They don't lead with their hearts and their passion. And what I mean by that is, they put together a demo, that it's what they think other people want to hear, because they say, oh, you know what I'm gonna put in, I'm sure, Scott, you got a lot of demos in your time for musicians, and you'll see it, they're all the same, where it's like, here's my orchestral tune. Here's my rock and roll tune. Here's my jazz tune. Here's my, you know, this tune, and that tune in my Polka tune and listen, and they put a whole bunch of different, you know, they're ripping off a bunch of different genres of music. And I never understood that. Because what I always tell people is put on your demo.



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One what you love the most, what you're passionate the most, if you were to do an album of music, what would that sound like? That should be your demo. Because if you're really great at polka music,



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then we all in an action. And at some point, somebody's going to need a polka tune. And like, "Oh,

then go all in on poker. And at some point, somebody's going to need a poker tune. And like, I'll give you an example.



1:12:15

If I'm working if I'm looking for a



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reggae tune, do I want to hire Joe hotshot in Hollywood? Who's going to rip off Bob Marley? Or do I want to hire Joe Rasta man, who's like, you know, three sheets to the wind high office asked who lives in Jamaica? And who does this for a living? I want that guy. I don't want somebody to try to rip off this style. I want the guy. Right. Right. You authenticity. Yes. And so if you do piano, new age music, then that's what you should put on there. Don't try to be something you're not or something that you think others want to hear. Variety doesn't mean shit. We want the passion, the heart. You know, there was a guy who gave me a demo. And it was like Zydeco music. And for people who don't know Zydeco is like, you know, like Louisiana.



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Cajun, Cajun music, you know, very distinctive, kind of, and, and it stood out to me, I'm like, holy crap, like, this is really cool. Zydeco music and, and then I had a game I was working on a fishing game. And I'm like, I'm calling this dude up.



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I want some Cajun zydeco for my fishing game. Right. And, and it worked out great. So, so yeah, so don't try and imitate others or put on there what you think others want to hear? Do what you're most passionate about. Because that shines through. And I got news for you. That's your best stuff. You want to put your best stuff on your demo.



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So let's let's talk about speaking of passion. Let's talk about a passion of yours. I'm one that I have as well. Spider Man. Yeah, let's talk about Spider Man. So So you have had you you've had you got to work. What was that like? Making music? This is back in what year was this? 2001 was Spider Man 1998 Oh, that's right. 98 for PlayStation right.



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What was what was it like your your you've made games you've been? You've been making, you know, games for a while. How did you how did you get that gig? What was it like? I'll tell you it was really interesting because so the team I was working with. They were never they were called never thought and



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So for people who know about the industry, so I was on the original Tony Hawk Pro Skater team, the original one, the one that blew everything up. And that was with never saw. And so Guitar Hero, sorry.



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Tony Hawk was now the biggest selling award winning, had every, you know, 22 million units sold across all the platforms. And all my audio and stuff was in there. And so never soft said to me. Hey, look,



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you know, we just got the Spider Man license.



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You know, do you want to work on Tony Hawk to? Or Spider Man? Now anyone in the right mind would have said, Are you kidding me?



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Are you kidding me? I want Tony Hawk to write the royalties. You know, we're crazy. And I said, bucket Spider Man. Hello. And, and I remember we were talking about the storyline. And now and I'm like, Guys, why don't we just get Stan Lee to read this and do the dialogue? And they're like, we can't get Stanley. Are you kidding? No one can get like Stanley like, where's he even live? And like, I don't think he lives down the street.



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back then. He wasn't a deal, right? This was before the movies before all that stuff. Like, I should get a hold of Stanley. I'm like, I'll call his ass up. I'm sure. You know, I'm sure I'll figure out a way. And I eventually got a hold of him. I forget how even I think I knew a friend of a friend or something. And I called them up and I and he answered his phone. Hello. And I said hi, this is Tony. And the way you think Stan Lee is like, he really is in person. Like Like, like, you know, we would be just hanging in he became a good friend, a dear friend, so many. You know, I probably worked with them probably 20 different times in my life, everything from being on my TV show to my concerts to video games. But even in like cons like, like I knew a lot of convention people. They knew that I knew Stan Lee. So I would. I would hook up his internet in his house when it would go down. I swear to God.



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And he would always call me Hey, Tommy Excelsior. Like, I swear to God, I would get. And it was funny because he was on AOL. And Scott is you know, I was on AOL for a long time. I still have an AOL account. And I'm so do i Man. Now it's retro.



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Retro. So Stan Lee was on in his in his AOL account was like comic book man at AOL. It was hilarious. And so we would write each other on AOL all the time. And it was funny because



1:17:59

I showed him a pitch I have a Spider Man room in my house, as you know, Scott. And and, and, and one of my claims to fame and I was in wizard magazine about this. One of my claims to fame is I have one of the finest Spider Man collections in the world. I have every Amazing Spider Man. And all of the offshoots even like spider man 2077. So completed spy was



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everything from electric company, Spidey super stories to Peter Parker, everything and even the crossovers and the Marvel team up if Spider Man was in it from 1962 to about 2000. I have it and it's in mint condition near mint condition, one of the finest Spider Man collections in the world. And so I'm taking picture and I got Stanley to sign inside. I got Steve Ditko is Well, fine inside. And on my spider man one and my amazing fantasy 15. And not on the covers, though, because that's a guy No, no, never, never the covers.



1:19:10

And then I got John Romita, senior as well on some of my things. But anyway, the intro, I take a picture of my spider man room and my spider man collection. And again, this was right when you could take pictures digitally and email them and stuff. And I remember sending them to Stanley, and it's the greatest email ever. I printed it out and I have it. I had it framed in my spider man room. And he emails me back and he goes, kid, you got a problem.



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It was pretty funny.



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I love that story. That's awesome. That's great. Well, that's cool. That's



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yeah, let's if you have some questions, go ahead and post them to the chat. In the meantime. All right. While we're waiting for some questions



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I have another question for you. And that is I've read and this is actually something I didn't know about you which is slightly unusual that you collect Bassam ik vinegar. What is up with that? So I, it's DLP, it's it's balsamic, it's traditional balsamic vinegar, which is very, so So 99% of the vinegars that you see out there are all just phony. It's, it's. So this is like a champagne thing, right? Or like, parmesan cheese thing, right? There's only one place you can get it. That's right, right yo Parmesan is what you want to do. And so



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traditional balsamic vinegar is only made in a



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region of Italy, which is right near where Ferrari is made Ferrari Marinello. And down the street is Modena and Enzo Ferrari was born in Modena, and Lamborghini is there. Luciano Pavarotti was born there, it's just this amazing. Ducati is there mas, harati Lamborghini and Pavani. Pagani all within this, this area of Italy a 10 mile radius. And so balsalmic the real bottles are only by the government has to approve them. And they only give it to certain there's a very, very straight process very strict and hard process. And every year, they'll allow three or four at a time tires, which are the places where the vinegar is is aged for for decades, decades. So one you get to 25 years and have a 15 year one too, but the extra vecchio or the extra long is that the stuff you want to get. And they can only bottle and the government has to bottle them. So there's no funny business. And it's literally just the great must in about seven barrels that gets passed down from generations. And those go for about \$300 A bottle. Wow. So what do you what do you do with this? Do you do like, dip your bread in it and eat it? Do you keep it for like in your cellar? What's the what's the deal with the vinegar? I converted my wine cellar because I don't drink. So I converted the wine cellar into a balsamic cellar.



1:22:42

About I have about



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I mean, sadly, this is funny to say but I have about 100 bottles. So again, do the math on \$300 A shot so I got about 30 grand and balsamic vinegar that I'll never drink. But again, it's it's like it's like a wine but and it's like molasses it's not right, right. Like you put it on solid. You put it on strawberries, you put it on ice cream, you put it on, you know you put it on food at the end,

you put on chocolate, you know. So yeah, this is amazing. Amazing thing. It's so sounds sounds fantastic. I'll have to come by and try some sometimes you come by it'll blow your mind, your mind will be blown and you'll never be able to touch another vinegar ever again. Because you know what the real stuff. Right? Speaking of blowing your mind, I have some great questions here. So I have a good one from Daniel. And and he says, What advice do you give to game directors when communicating ideas to Ms. Musicians? Would you usually get more precise instructions or themes to go with? Or were you mostly free to the approach? Do you free to approach the music how you wanted to do it? That's a great, fantastic question. And, and the greatest music I've ever done is always when I've had free rein, right. And so like Scott, I'll give you an example. Like when we were working on treasures the deep. You know, there might be a few notes here in there, you know that you would have or that John body would have. But for the most part, you let me go you let me doo doo doo you're saying you know,



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because the reason you hire composers and audio designers is because you trust that they're the best at what is going to be done right? And so



1:24:42

you don't want to hire somebody to rip off John Williams. You don't want to hire somebody to rip off Nine Inch Nails. You're hiring somebody because you believe that they're the best person from the job from a creative level. So you know the way I create video game music is it



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Just play the game with no sound at all. And I just wait for things to come into my head. And so if I have a producer or designer saying, Hey, we wanted exactly to be like this. So my advice would be, let this creative person who you've hired, let them off the leash, at least at the beginning, right and see what he comes up with. And because you might be so surprised at what they come back with that, that your mind will be blown. And then but if it doesn't work out, then you might say, oh, you know what, maybe here's a couple of tracks that I was thinking about, here's a couple of styles that we were thinking about, that might be good. And then maybe you can use that to kind of be towards the direction. But before you do that, let them go off on your own because they're thinking of stuff that you probably haven't thought of yet. And I mean, Earthworm Jim is a perfect example, where, you know, we're all just trying to make each other laugh. It's like, let me see, Jim, is in the asteroids on a rocket ship. What music should we do? No one was ever going to say, Let's do banjo music. Because it's funny, right? But that was what I came up with. Because I wanted it to be funny. I didn't say oh, it's in space. Let's do Star Wars. No, let's do the opposite. Because people will think it's funny. And it reminds me so. So Len ended up super memorable, right? That's, you know, that's one of the things that people remember from that game. Is that crazy soundtrack. So



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that's great. So So yeah, so give give the artists free rein. But be ready to give them examples. If it goes a little off the rails. Now. It's good advice. I think. I think that's good advice for any

if it goes a little on the fans. Now, it's good advice. I think. I think that's good advice for any creative, right? Any artist or designer or anything like that? Yeah. And the temp music. Exactly. Daniel, you nailed it, right? So many times. The first thing is the producer designer. Let's put in temp music. And the bad thing about temp music, is that people get used to it too quick. Kill and stifle anything new and unique. And one of the best soundtracks ever that you're that you're reminded of it because they're unique. Not because they sound like Star Wars or Nine Inch Nails or John Williams, not because oh, this kind of sounds like Raiders of the Lost Ark. Those aren't the ones you remember. The ones you remember are the ones that did something totally unique and different. And outside the box. Do not put temp music in. Right or even worse, you might influence your musician to make something similar like what happened with Ghostbusters. Right? Right. Exactly. Oh, they put it Huey Lewis. He wrote Ghostbusters in a new way, Louis today you're ripping me off. And yeah. And here's then there's still I think there's still fighting in the courts over that one. One. Huey Lewis one. Right. Right. All right. So Nick Hill has a great question, which says, networking seems to be hard. To start off with a lot. I guess. Nico has been having some bad experiences with some of the networking where they've encountered some scamming or some other problems. Any advice on how to keep a mindset of making networking work, even after running into some catastrophes? Yeah, you're gonna I got news for you. Is it Nick? Is that mixing? Yeah. Nick, Nick.



1:28:38

Nick, Nick, here's the thing. You're gonna run into 100 catastrophes? It might even be 200 catastrophes? How do you avoid them? By running into catastrophes and learning from that experience? Right? You know, because you'll start to see the signs.



1:28:59

You know, yeah, not every experience you're going to have is going to be a positive one. And that's okay. And, and, and every time you fall down, it's the way you pick yourself up. That is the key to success. My favorite movie of all time is Rocky. Right? And it's easy for this is for an East Coast Italian to say that right? But



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my favorite piece of film history ever is in that 14th round. And Apollo finally knocks rocky down again. And he goes and his arms are in the air. And Mickey is telling her kids Stay down, stay down, stay down and he's finally gotten beat after all this time. And then Adrienne walks out because she hears the crowd going crazy. Because she wouldn't she didn't want to see the fight so she



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Finally walks out and sees rocky down on the canvas. And she's, you know, you can feel her death. But the greatest film in him the greatest film I think ever recorded, and Rocky, what does he do? He pulls his ass up, nothing was going to stop him against everything. And he turns it and he goes, turns around, and he goes, come on, come on. And the look, that Apollo Creed played by Burt, yeah, the look that he gave him,



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when he just puts his hands on his hip, and he just goes like, this, I think is the greatest acting and piece of film history ever. Like, you cannot believe that this guy, after everything I've done to him, he still wants a piece of me. And that's how you have to approach your life and your career. And so those scammers or bad actors or whatever you that you ran into, might have knocked you down. So what, so what you're gonna get back up, you're gonna go out there, you're gonna take what you learned, move that, maybe you're gonna miss that next jam, because you've seen that one come in before, and you're gonna, you're gonna go at him, and you're never gonna quit. And that's how you're going to make it.



1:31:31

Great, great advice, getting to know people to Nick. It's making legitimate friends with, right?



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aren't going to screw you over. Right? Well, okay, fair enough. But you know, in all the time that I've known Scott Rogers, he's never screwed me over. And I've never screwed him over. We have a mutual friendship, we have a mutual respect. And that was something that we cultivated within the first week of knowing each other, right. And that's something that is so important. When when you when you're, when you, when you, you gravitate to people who are like you, you know, you gravitate. And when you have an open heart, and an open mind, and you're passionate about something, guys like Scott, who are also that same way, you're gonna gravitate, Scott was passionate, Scott was talented, Scott, you you recognize each other, and you become friends. And I trust that Scott's going to treat me right. Scott knows that I'm gonna do whatever it takes to treat him right. And to make the project great. It's not about the money, it's about the great thing that we're going to create together. That's the most important thing to me. Whereas Scott will tell you, he works with other audio people, and they're like, well, you're gonna pay me X amount of dollars for this amount of music and this amount of sound effects. And Scott notes from working with me, I'd be like, Okay, let's agree on the number. Great. Now I'm finishing the game. And if and if there's 20 more minutes that we didn't know about, or there's 100 More sounds that we didn't know about. I don't care. I don't care. I took this project to finish it and make it great. I'm not gonna go back to you and charge you 50 more dollars. Because there's 10 more sound effects. Screw that out. I'd also hire you taught me because you'd let me do voices of the characters in the game. That was the other



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networking thing you want to get



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in the game?



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Speaking of games, so David has a great question, which is what are your top tips for marketing video games? Now, David, I don't know you didn't specify whether it was your own games? Or if you're marketing it for a big system, like the Intellivision but But what would you advise somebody who is maybe still on Kickstarter, or on Indiegogo or something like that, and trying to get the word out about their game? So there he says, David does a perfect example where he said it for his own game on the PC. So no, okay, great. So David knows that when he put his game on Steam, and it was on that new release with probably for about 20 minutes, because there's so much content, right? And it's like, Man, I want to be discovered, and now that window of opportunity is lost, right? So you got it. You got to do it. You got to you know, start talking to YouTubers.



1:34:36

And again, they don't have to be Yeah, absolutely. I want to I want to play a boxing RPG send that stuff to Intellivision. David, I want to I want to take a look at that I'm serious.



1:34:47

And so,



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you know, going the gorilla route is the way to go. Now, if you can save up 500 bucks and and use some key



1:35:00

Words, and get that out there on Facebook and Instagram, right? Um,



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you know, and you're using boxing,



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you know, video game, RPG, whatever, you know, to use as, as things in your, in your targeting a certain demographic and a certain age group, you know, to get them over to your game that, oh, it's two and a half d. So that's great, because, you know, we have a lot of our games are two and a half d



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on our system. So that sounds perfect for us. So definitely send us an email. Um, but the thing is, you got to get it in the hands, even if you because everybody makes the same mistake. And they say, Oh, well, who's the biggest YouTuber out there? Oh, let me see if PewDiePie will talk about it, you know, or Ninja? No. It's all about, find somebody that has 1000 followers, who maybe is into retro games or the style of games that you're into, and beg them and ask them and saying, Hey, can I send you a free copy of the game, and you know, in hopes that if you like it, that you'll talk about it. And you'll find that people that only have like five or 10,000 followers or 1000 followers, whatever, they're always looking for new content, and they never get approached by people to cover their content, because they're trying to climb the ladder of success themselves. Right? And so, you know, getting to those type of people, but you know, what, they have 1000 people, and maybe 500 People watch that. And now 500 People know about your game, and if he gives it a good review, boom, boom, boom, boom, so So yeah, that's, that's, that's a really great way to go is using, you know, social media to advertise but really using YouTube



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in order to get other people to see your game, because everybody's trying to create content out there. Yeah.



Tommy Tallarico 1:37:15

Yeah, get get the word out, get the visuals out. The visuals, I think are even more important than just, you know, saying, Oh, I've got a game, you gotta learn. Yeah, do a trailer, back it up with some gameplay, you know, and, and I would, I would add to that, Tommy is try to build a community, try to find like minded people that are interested in what you're making. And then you know, you're making a family, right? You're making a family of people who love what you're making. Because in the end, it's always better to have what did they say like 1000 dedicated fans than then, you know, millions of people, right? You want those 1000 people that got your back the whole time, they're there to buy your game, and in the end to cheer you on and say, keep doing that awesome stuff that you're doing so. So yeah, consider yourself like a new band, right? You want them to hear your music before they buy it, right. And so again, putting together and I would suggest putting together a one minute trailer so that you can get it on Twitter, the whole thing so you can get it doesn't have to be three minutes. One minute, boom, boom, quick, fast, exciting, nice music, nice graphic visual effects, you know, and you hit them from this, you hit them right from the beat one foot right from the start, you make it exciting, because that then becomes your advertisement as well. That's your commercial. Also, when you start getting that out there and people start, you know, and again, be bold, be that homeless kid who walked into the manager's office at Guitar Hero, you know. And so, Guitar Center, you know, tweet your, your boxing game to HBO, tweet it to Sugar Ray Leonard, tweet it to Mike Tyson. Tweet it to 1000 Different boxers who have accounts, one of them is gonna like it and look at it. And and then he tweets out to 10,000 other people, it's got to start somewhere. You gotta write gotta grind my friends. Yeah. Who knows? Who knows where anything will lead, right? It's, it's, you know, half of the opportunities that have come up in both of our careers. were things that you know, later on as you think about it, you're like, I did not

expect that to happen at all, but, but it did. And that's outside the box. You got to be different. You know, Scott, you remember back in the 90s. I'd walk around d3, with a gold LeMay Elvis jacket on



1:40:00

Yeah, for no other reason and you and your like circus performers following you around wherever you went. We had pretty girls and models and bodyguards, and, and performers. And, and it was it was a walking circus, right? Yeah, absolutely. For the only reason why, you know, it was fun, but I wanted people to go, Who the hell is that? Because before people were getting names and credits and stuff, who is that guy? You know? And that's how I began, and people were taking pictures of me. And people were putting me in magazines. And



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that's where I first saw you. I saw you in a magazine and I read an article I said, Who the hell is this guy? Tommy? Tallarico. Right.



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So there you go. So that's alright. So



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I have I have a question for you. And that is, you know, in my mind, Tommy, you've been a rock star long before you were a rock star. Right? You know, you've been playing rock concerts now for what you say. 20 years. You've been doing the? Yeah, that's amazing. Congrats, man. So what is what is your favorite song to play live? at that concert? Yeah, I mean, it would be cheap to say my own like from Earthworm Jim. So I won't, I'll skip that.



1:41:19

I love we open the show with Castlevania and I did a



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rock. So where, you know, I took four of the greatest Castlevania films, Vampire Killer and all that. And I mash them together in a three minutes saying pipe organ orchestra drums and bass and guitar. So it starts out.



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And I go ladies and gentlemen, Bob, Bob, boys and girls.



1:41:53

Bom, bom, bom, Castlevania data?



1:42:00

And it's just the energy. Because people are like, Okay, we're going to this video game show. And it says Symphony do we clap? Do we be quiet? Like, how do we like they have no idea what they're about to experience. And so I didn't want to I don't want to start out with like, you know, oh, here's Kingdom Hearts.



1:42:20

Right? No, I hit them right in the face. They don't have no idea what's coming. And all of a sudden, all the lights go on. And there's this crazy guy on guitar and rock and roll and the orchestra and the pipe organ and Castlevania. And they're jumping out of their seats. So



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that you know that adrenaline rush that adrenaline flow of that first 10 seconds and then you can just feel the energy. So Castlevania is probably my mom would be my answer. Nice. Nice. Well, I look forward to getting to the show one day live. I've watched many recordings of it. I just I to my regret I have yet to attend. But once. Maybe will you have a show coming? Did you just have it or it's coming up? In Texas? I have a show in Texas next week, next Saturday? Night, Lubbock, Texas. Yeah, it's her first show back after a year. Yeah. Because the COVID is probably the only show we're doing this year. And you know, if you know Texas was like, Yeah, we kick COVID. 's out. We know Texas. COVID isn't allowed in Texas. No, but So yeah, that's that's definitely probably our only show this year. So and it's all functional distance. And they only sold every three seats. And everybody's got to wear masks. So it's good. It's



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it's a little unorthodox, the how we're doing the performance, but and all the musicians are even spaced apart. 16 So, but it'll be fun to to get back out there and give people some little bit of normalcy, hopefully in their lives. Right. Right. Well, yeah, I'm glad to hear everybody's being safe. And I'm sure it's gonna be an amazing show. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I won't be attending but maybe in 2022 We'll get out there. Absolutely. So



1:44:09

all right, so I'll we're getting close to the end here. This has been an amazing two hours with utami. I will wrap it up with my last question, which is what is next for Tommy Tallarico. In television, we're gonna we're gonna we're gonna come out with this system this year. And you

know, I got the next seven to 10 years to make it to sell 10s of millions of units. That's my goal right now. Right? Making television Great. Which, which of the tie so you know, when I go to buy my my console at on 1010 2021 and I pick up that woodgrain edition of the Intellivision, what what games do you recommend that I go for? What are your What are your some of your star type?



1:45:00

idols. So we have six games right in the in the system they, Oh, which ones are those? Astro smash shark shark Farkle, which is a dice game, coral skiing and an unannounced six game that were announced later this year. And so it really depends the way to answer that question is depends on are you going to be playing the first time with with yourself by yourself? Or are you going to be playing with someone else? So what's my family because that's the Miko is family. Right? Exactly. So if you're playing with your family, you know, even something as simple as the dice game, because it's really crazy. Got the screen. And so you're you're rolling the dice, you're, you're, you know, moving the dice here, and you're hearing the bite, you're hearing the dice out of the speaker, and the vibrations are in the thing. And then you just throw it up on screen, and then the dice appear on the screen. So just that little like wow, moment, but cornhole is another really fun one. You know, the beanbag toss? Sure. Yeah. Like we bowling, you know, like, so if you're with your family. But if you're by yourself, and you're, you know, you're more of a gamer. Astro Smash is so beautiful. The music is so powerful. And it's just an anyone can jump in. You play up to four players, if one to four players, anyone can jump in at any time. That's a really nice one. And so those all come with the system. So



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if you're an old school gamer, like like me, and you I know, you'll probably love Moon Patrol. Oh, right. Yeah, classic, is amazing. knightstalker is another good one for gamers. Cloudy Mountain, which is the old d&d game. All right. Yeah. Television d&d. Yeah. Cool. We got that. So yeah, listen, there's some big ones out there some really nice and, and will you be taking a break from your presidential duties to compose any music for any of these games? I'm the audio director on 50 games right now. So that's yeah, so that's what I do on the weekends. Yeah. For the last two years, the last two and a half years, I do the audio design with Joey and, and on the music director. And every once in a while, all right, a tune here and there. Yeah. That's awesome. Yeah, sure, it is, right. As CEO, the hardware company, you can imagine, like, you know, I like so I created design this machine, and got all these smart people to make it for me, who have like 55 employees. But you know, like, my, my daily life now is kind of, and I designed, you know, 90% of the games codesign 90% of these games. And so, so during the day, though, it's all like spreadsheet meetings, and legal and marketing and investing meetings and, and contract manufacturing. And, you know, all this stuff. So it's like, what have I got myself into now? But no, but so there's a lot of that. And then at night, and early in the morning, I'm doing a lot of the design stuff. I am producing stuff. And then on the weekends, I'm doing audio.



1:48:18

And again, oh, man, it's not a great up to me. It's what I love doing. I'm excited. I'm passionate about it, you know? Yeah, absolutely. And that definitely, I mean, you know, I already knew

that, but it definitely shows, you know, that passion. Wow. Well, Tommy, I mean, we have like, barely scraped the surface. It's, you know, you have an amazing career. We haven't even talked about, you know, 295 of the games that you worked on. But so maybe another time, you know, in the future, we can have some other programming to talk about all those. But, man, it's, it's so great to see you. It's so great to hear from you. You're just you know, you're you're killing it. As always, I'm really proud to hear of all you know, it's just always I'm never surprised. Like Dave Perry. I'm another one of those. I'm not surprised. It's It's Tommy. Yeah. But, but thank you so very much for joining us here. It's been a real pleasure. I hope everybody that was watching us live, enjoyed it. And everybody who watches this on YouTube also gets the benefit from all your awesome advice. And if anyone wants to reach out to you online, is there any way like a good way to reach you or follow you? On Twitter, Tommy Tallarico, and people can message me there.



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Facebook's a little tougher to get me but but Twitter's probably the easiest or okay. And then my website is teleferico.com. Right. And then if anybody is a aspiring developer, they can reach out through the Intellivision website. Yep, yep, there's a nice form for that.



1:50:00

All right, well take take it up man Tommy's looking for people he's looking for your game that boxing game, go out there and, and and pitch it out there. Well, thank you everybody so much for a huge hand for Tommy Tallarico. And we thank you again for attending our masters of game design. Everybody, please stay safe and we'll see you at the next one of these. Take care everyone